

MRIP Listening Session
Northeast Regional Coordinating Council
Summary Report

Location: Providence, RI

Date: April 2, 2008

Purpose: To gather input from Regional Office and Science Center staff, Council members and staff, state partners and constituents to assure that the MRIP design that we are developing is appropriately tailored to the specific fishery management and stock assessment needs of the region. Further, such an assessment will enable us to begin to identify and prioritize regional needs for MRIP projects for the next round of project funding, with FY 2008 funds.

MRIP Team Members: Gordon Colvin, Preston Pate, Rob Andrews, Forbes Darby and Scott Sauri

Agencies/Groups Represented: Mid-Atlantic Council, New England Council, NE Regional Office, NE Fishery Science Center, ASMFC

Attachments: Agenda, list of attendees

Major Points and Comments:

1. The ultimate test of the success of the program will be when a product is delivered and public trust begins to build. The sooner the program gets definitive direction and begins generating numbers the better.
2. The public has the perception that MRFSS has no credibility because there are too many other perceived indicators to contradict MRFSS estimates.
3. The NEFMC is moving towards hard TAC management, which is a major shift and a new approach for recreational fisheries, thereby necessitating the need for more timely data.
4. PA is not covered by current telephone survey. The number of PA saltwater anglers may be high and has not been counted in the past.
5. It is very important that the survey program be designed to be adaptable and provide data that is sufficiently broad to be able to respond to changes in the fisheries and ecosystems (e.g. climate changes), changes in law and policy and the needs of managers and scientists.
6. It was asked if it is reasonable to expect that we will continue to rely on the MRFSS for the next few years. The answer was yes, but that we will begin

making improvements as the ongoing projects indicate are necessary and as the registry becomes available.

7. It is important that we clearly explain how we will proceed as results of the projects come in. There needs to be a budget plan that supports implementation, including dual frame work, calibration and beyond. NOAA needs to be able to discuss that budget plan with the public and to state clearly what we will implement in 2009.

Comments Specific to Data Needs:

1. Need shorter wave periods, especially during periods of pulse fisheries.
2. For species that are assessed and managed as more than one geographic stock unit, assessments need recreational catch to be assigned to each such unit (e.g. Gulf of Maine winter flounder; George's Bank cod). Otherwise, current data are generally adequate for assessment purposes for commonly encountered species.
3. Need better estimates of landings from private access points (especially summer flounder).
4. Need better estimates of landings from night fishing (especially bluefish).
5. Current discard information is inadequate.
6. Need to add Wave 1 to sampling because fishing activity is expanding seasonally and geographically.
7. Immediate priority is to provide managers with information to best manage ACLs and implement AMs.
8. Council decisions and data delivery need to be in sync.
9. Spatial resolution needs to be better refined.
10. Monthly waves would improve ability of states to manage state-by-state quotas, facilitate in-season adjustments, and provide more accurate picture of seasonal events.
11. The Councils are concerned with reducing the size of the "buffer" between the ABC and the ACL. Greater precision and lower PSE's are necessary to accomplish this.
12. Will need to calibrate MRFSS and MRIP estimates so managers can set ACLs with more confidence.
13. There will be a need to revisit historical allocations of resource. This will also be a calibration issue.

Comments Specific to Outreach:

1. Need to target and involve recreational leaders to improve buy-in and support

Comments Specific to Socioeconomic Data

1. Increasing fuel prices will affect angler behavior.

2. Economic studies can be important to the industry.
3. It would be very helpful to get a better handle on where population growth and demographic changes are occurring.